

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes a change to FIG. 6a on page 6/10. This sheet, which includes FIG. 6a, FIG. 6b, FIG. 7a and FIG. 7b, replaces the prior sheet containing these same figures. In FIG. 6a, numeral 537 is corrected to numeral 536.

Attachments: Replacement Sheet 6/10.

Annotated Sheet 6/10 Showing Changes.

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges the confirmation in the Office Action of the election Response and that claims 1-4 and 6-9 remain in this application. Accordingly, on the accompanying Listing of Claims, claims 5 and 10 are indicated as being withdrawn.

In response to the objection to the drawings, reference character "537" in FIG. 6a has been corrected to reference character "536." The Office will note that this change is a correction of an obvious error and the resulting numbering corresponds to that of FIG. 6b. Applicant respectfully understands that the accompanying Replacement Sheet successfully responds to this matter.

Claims 4, 7 and 8 are objected to as being contrary to the prohibition of having a multiply dependent claim depend from another multiply dependent claim. Each of claims 4 and 7 are amended so as to be dependent upon only claim 1. The subject matter of claim 8 is incorporated into claim 1, and claim 8 is otherwise cancelled. These revisions also obviate the further objection to claims 7 and 8 as being dependent from withdrawn claim 5. Applicant respectfully understands that these revisions fully remove the objections to claims 4, 7 and 8.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kostelac U.S. Patent No. 6,108,817. Inasmuch as the subject matter of claim 8, not thereby rejected, has been

incorporated into claim 1, applicant respectfully understands that this §102(b) rejection has been obviated.

Each of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9, including the various multiple claim dependencies identified in paragraph 7 of the Office Action, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) from Powell WO/02/087406. Also, claims 7, 8 and 9, and their respective multiple dependency claims, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 from Powell in view of Pease U.S. Patent No. 1,528,026.

Currently amended claim 1 further defines the palm support means as comprising one or more resilient yokes. In addition, claim 1 continues to specify that the hand-utility interface comprises a foamed block body. Powell does not disclose an interface comprising a foamed block body, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection from Powell are respectfully requested.

More specifically, the Examiner indicates in paragraph 7 of the Office Action that Powell discloses a foamed block body (18), the Office suggesting that this is disclosed in paragraph 7 on page 3 of Powell. However, this paragraph in Powell only discloses that the body provides a uniform work surface. There is no disclosure of a foamed block body. Applicant further notes that on page 8, the second full paragraph, Powell teaches that the glove is made from "a semi-rigid or rigid material," with polymer materials given as an example. This passage

likewise provides no suggestion by Powell that the body of the glove could be made from foam, or have a foamed block body.

Turning now to the §103 rejection from Powell in view of Pease, the Office states in paragraph 9 that Pease teaches a spongy block body (A) for cleaning, the Office suggesting that this disclosure teaches the claimed foamed block body to remove this deficiency of Powell. Pease teaches either a sponge with a cavity "B" having thumb cavities "C" and finger cavities "D" and "E" scooped out from a sponge. Pease further allows for a glove-like member (FIG. 3). Whether a glove is included or not, Pease does not disclose a "foamed block body" as applicant claims. Nor does the optional Pease glove function as resilient yokes, also a component of current claim 1. It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select a sponge with cavities and an optional glove as being an obvious combination with the product as in the Powell reference that is a glove-like interface and not a sponge.

Neither Powell nor Pease, whether alone or in combination, teach the structure of applicant's presently amended claims. These claims define a hand-utility interface product that has the advantage of a foamed block body. The advantage of having a foamed block body is that the finger-receiving channels can snugly receive the fingers of the user's hand to assist in securing the hand-utility interface product to the user's hand. By contrast, the glove of Powell is made from a semi-rigid or

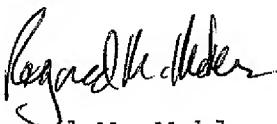
rigid material which would not conform to snugly receive the user's fingers. Powell thus teaches and requires resilient finger support means, for example in the form of a caged framework (4) in order to help secure the glove to the user's hand. See particularly the second full paragraph on page 5 of Powell, along with FIG. 1 and the associated description of Powell. The Pease sponge does not remove these defects. Even if it had been obvious to combine Pease with Powell, this advantage would not have been achieved.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejection from Powell in view of Pease are respectfully requested, as is the allowance of all of the claims remaining in the present application.

Applicant has made an earnest endeavor to place this application into condition for allowance, and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX FOLLOWS

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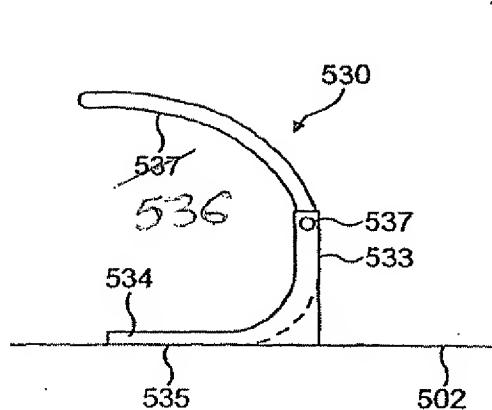


FIG. 6a

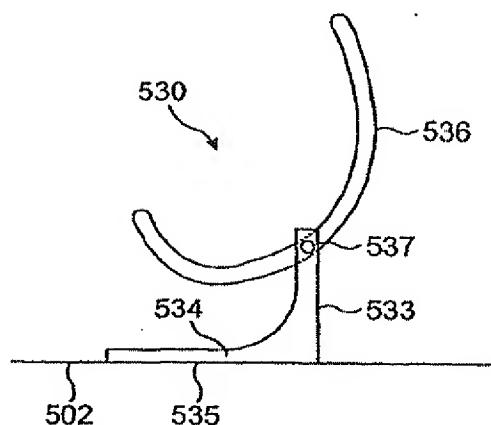


FIG. 6b

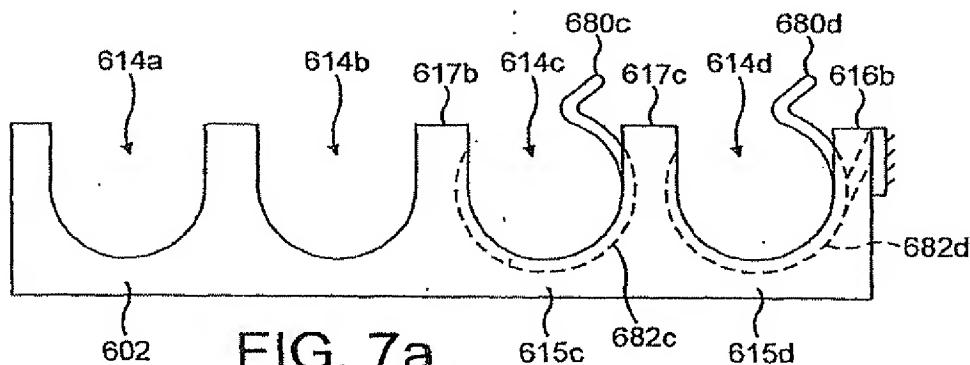


FIG. 7a

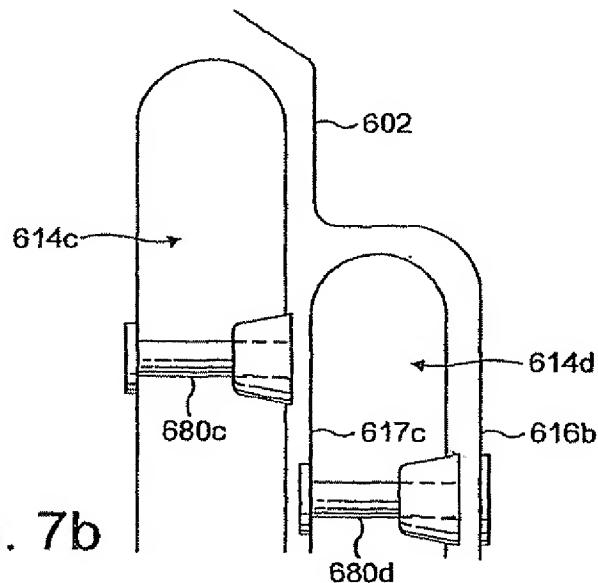


FIG. 7b

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)